

MISSILES & ROCKETS

CPYRIGHT

Aerojet's Dan Kimball is not sure a nuclear rocket is practical. He says this is the consensus of many propulsion scientists, and asks Congress to authorize \$50 million to be spent over several years to find out if nuclear propulsion is practical. Kimball told the House Committee on Science and Astronautics that very little has been done in the field so far. He also ventured that the U.S. is ahead of the Russians in solid propellants, about even in liquids—a statement based on Central Intelligence Agency reports to Aerojet.

The Committee wants to be sure CIA and other agencies are passing information along to industrial concerns that can use it. However, says Kimball: "We learn nothing new from the USSR."

FOIAb3b

CPYRIGHT

Larry Houston advises that the hearing was held on March 16, 1959, some days after this Committee had been briefed by CIA on the Russian program. His statement follows:

There are two parts of the transcript which appear to be significant. In his prepared statement at the opening, Mr. Kimball made the following statement concerning the importance of propulsion programs:

"The second area is that of what can be termed propaganda and prestige. The Russians are ahead of us in several fields of solid scientific achievement. We do not object to being left cold in some ways, such as establishing slave labor camps, but we cannot afford to have world opinion regard the Communist system as being more capable in worthwhile activities."

During the questioning later on, the Chairman asked Representative Leonard G. Wolf (D., Iowa), a member of the Committee, if he had any questions. (Mr. Wolf had been present during the CIA briefing of the Committee.) The following exchange took place:

"Mr. Wolf. What I am curious about, Mr. Kimball, do you have any facility in your company to take advantage of the findings of CIA or any other way to equate what we learn from Russia to help you with your research.

"Mr. Kimball. Yes, sir.

"Mr. Wolf. Can you tell us a little in open session about how you use this material, or what you get?

"Mr. Kimball. I think I could say we haven't found anything that the Russians have done that we haven't already known.

"Mr. Wolf. That is a good answer. Would you care to compare their propulsion systems and their fuels a little bit with ours? I notice there is something in the testimony that did this.

"Mr. Kimball. I can't give you any details on that. I think we are at least up to them now on liquid rocket engines and I think we are considerably ahead of them on solid rocket engines. That is my opinion."

It appears to me that once the questions were put, Mr. Kimball responded quite properly.